

*Just*Faith

*Purpose. From a
new perspective.*

JustFaith Closing Retreat

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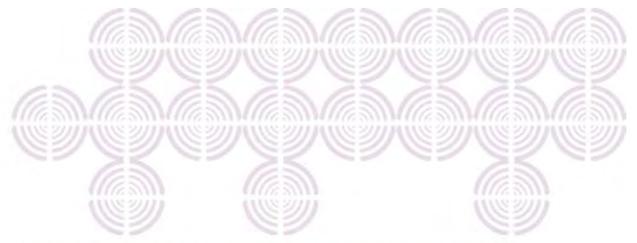


www.justfaith.org

(502) 429-0865

In partnership with





Note to Co-Facilitators

This final retreat is intended to meet three hopes. First, it is meant to celebrate the personal relationships among participants and their experience together. JustFaith has been a process through which people have together traveled, struggled, and grown in their care for the world and one other. There is much to celebrate! Keep the schedule relaxed and the conversations celebratory.

Second, this retreat is meant to include a deeper consideration of what has happened in the course of the program. Setting aside time to take a deliberate break from your routine and giving focused attention to the inner effects of this process are very important.

Third, the retreat is meant to take an intentional look at the next step in the journey of living the Gospel call to love and serve the least of our brothers and sisters. Individual participants and the group as a whole are invited to address the question of mission: What is my personal call? What is our collective mission? How can we support each other in responding to our call and mission?

Host the closing retreat within one or two weeks after Week 30.

Preparation for Co-Facilitators

Co-facilitators should review this document together. Refer to the Facilitator Timetable on pages 6 and 7 of this document.

Preparation for Participants

Ask all participants to prepare for the retreat by doing three things.

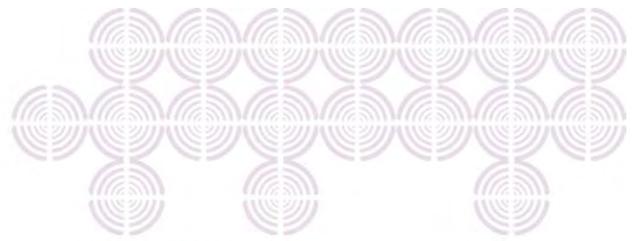
- First, invite each participant to review “Engaging the World Together,” a document that includes personal and group discernment. The group will use this document on the retreat.
- Second, ask participants to bring their copy of *Ten Social Ministry Options* they completed during Week 22 and their completed Discernment Exercise notes from Weeks 23 and 29.
- Third, if meals and snacks are to be prepared by the group, make sure that the division of responsibilities is arranged in advance.

Meals

At retreat centers, meals are usually provided. However, if you have your retreat at a church facility or at someone’s home, this allows the group to prepare their own meals; this is an activity that is fun and allows for conversation and practiced cooperation. Do not be deterred that cooking and cleaning take time and effort. That is exactly the point! If you choose to prepare your own meals, the division of cooking and food responsibilities should be decided at the sessions prior to the retreat.

Environment

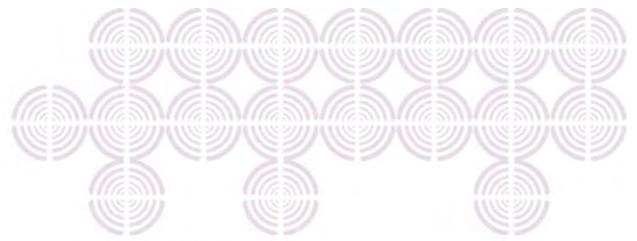
Set up the main meeting area with a circle of chairs or couches. Participants will be sitting and talking for a while each session, so be sure the space is comfortable. Use gentle, indirect lighting.



Closing Retreat Overview

These are suggested timeframes only. Facilitators should adjust the schedule based on the flow of the retreat segments, the needs of the group and the logistics of the retreat location.

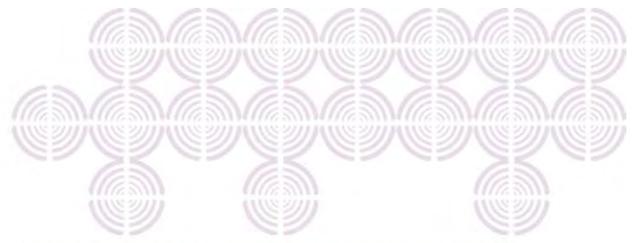
| Time Frame | Activity |
|---------------------------|--|
| Friday Night | |
| 7:00-7:30 | Opening Prayer (Attachment A) (Adjust if dinner is planned.) |
| 7:30-8:00 | Where have we been? What has happened? Solitary reflection. (Attachment B) |
| 8:00-8:40 | Group sharing on above reflection |
| 8:40-9:00 | Forgiveness Exercise |
| 9:00-9:10 | Closing Prayer |
| 9:10-9:30 | Social time |
| Saturday Morning | |
| 9:00-9:15 | Morning Prayer |
| 9:15-10:00 | Inspiring a Compassionate Commitment (Attachment C) |
| 10:00-10:30 | Group sharing |
| 10:30-12:00 | Affirmation Experience preparation for participants (Distribute blank note cards.) (Participants can take a break during this time.) |
| Saturday Afternoon | |
| 12:00-1:00 | Lunch |
| 1:00-3:00 | Affirmation Process |
| 3:00-4:30 | Personal Plan/Callings Exercise (Attachments D and E) (Participants can take a break during this time.) |
| 4:30-5:30 | Future Group Activities Discussion (Attachment F) |
| 5:30-6:30 | Dinner |
| 6:30- 7:30 | Closing Prayer (Attachment G) |
| 7:30-10:00 | Social Time |
| Sunday Morning | |
| When available | Worship service (adjust schedule as needed) |



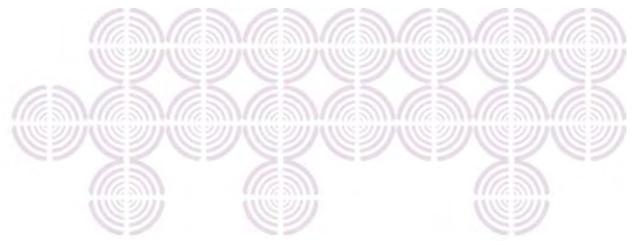
Closing Retreat Facilitator Timeline

Dates vary with JustFaith groups. Therefore, space has been left in each "To be done by" section for the facilitators to enter specific due dates as they relate to their particular schedules.

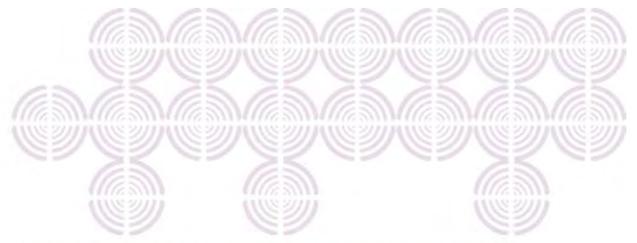
| Facilitator Responsibility | To be done by: |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Finalize arrangements for the Closing Retreat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm location arrangements. | Four weeks before the Closing Retreat |
| Inform participants of arrangements and preparation needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide map and directions to retreat location. • Discuss timeframe for retreat. • Arrange for meal preparation (if needed) and refreshments. • Ask each participant to review <i>Engaging the World Together</i>. • Ask participants to bring their copies of <i>Ten Social Ministry Options</i> completed during Week 22 and the Discernment Exercises completed for Weeks 23 and 29 | Two weeks before the Closing Retreat |
| Prepare Affirmation Cards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather enough 4x6 note cards to give each participant a packet of cards that reflects your group size minus one. • Separate the note cards into stacks reflecting group size minus one. | Two weeks before the Closing Retreat |
| Copy needed materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy attachments. • Make a few copies of Attachment F for those who may have forgotten to bring their copies. • Select songs for prayer services. | Two weeks before the Closing Retreat |
| Prepare for Friday night opening prayer service and exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for two pitchers, one filled with wine or grape juice, two chalices and a small loaf of bread to be arranged on a table. • Arrange for a cloth and candles for prayer service. • Review opening prayer service (Attachment A). • Select opening song and instrumental music or second song. | One week before the Closing Retreat |



| Facilitator Responsibility | To be done by: |
|--|--|
| <p>Prepare for Friday night exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review first exercise: What has happened to you? (Attachment B). ● Review directions for Forgiveness Exercise and prayer. ● Select optional closing prayer, if desired. | <p>One week before the Closing Retreat</p> |
| <p>Prepare for Saturday morning prayer and exercises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review Morning Prayer. ● Select meditative music to accompany Morning Prayer. ● Review directions for the Meditation and Reflection Exercise. ● Review directions for the Affirmation experience. | <p>One week before Closing Retreat</p> |
| <p>Prepare for Saturday afternoon exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review discussion questions about future personal goals. ● Review future group activities exercise. ● Consider options and finalize plans for the closing social event | <p>One week before Closing Retreat</p> |
| <p>Prepare for the closing prayer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review prayer service. ● Locate candle, incense, small slips of paper, oil, and bowl with sand. ● Select opening and closing song and instrumental music. | <p>One week before the Closing Retreat</p> |



| Items to Gather | Person Responsible |
|---|--------------------|
| <p>Set aside or delegate items to take to the retreat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing Retreat document (<i>this document</i>) • Engaging the World Together document • DVD from JustFaith Ministries: <i>Inspiring a Compassionate Commitment</i>. • DVD player and t.v. • Large candle and other candles as desired • Prayer cloth(s) • Incense, matches • Oil, two small glass bowls • Two pitchers • Wine or grape juice • Two wine glasses or chalices • Bread • Bible • Attachments • Note cards for the Affirmation Exercise • Slips of paper for closing prayer • Copies of words to songs (as needed) • Selected music CDs • CD player • Items for creating a prayer environment for the room • Clay or pottery bowl with sand | |



Closing Retreat: Friday Evening

If your group chooses to begin with a shared meal, offer a blessing and words of welcome before breaking bread. If there is no opportunity to share a meal, begin with the welcome and then the opening prayer.

Welcome/Opening Comments

Begin by sharing these thoughts in your own words:

- **This retreat is an opportunity to reflect deeply on what has happened in the course of the JustFaith journey. Extended reflection brings to light pieces of our journey that may not have been previously recognized, honored, or integrated. Honor the invitation to silence and the space to process this powerful experience.**
- **This retreat will also celebrate what has occurred over the last eight months. This will be a time to appreciate the blessings of new relationships, new commitments, and new spiritual journeys. It is a time to express gratitude and discover possibilities. Receive this retreat as a gift of time and space to share community.**

Opening Prayer (30 minutes)

You will need: A Bible marked at Acts 2: 1-18, Isaiah 58: 3-11, Ruth 1: 8-18, and John 13: 1-5, 12-15; one pitcher of wine or grape juice, one empty pitcher; a plate with a loaf of bread

Symbols: Bread and wine

Distribute **Attachment A**. Assign four readers and two leaders.

If desired, begin with an opening song of your choice for reflection.

Continue by following the directions on the attachment.

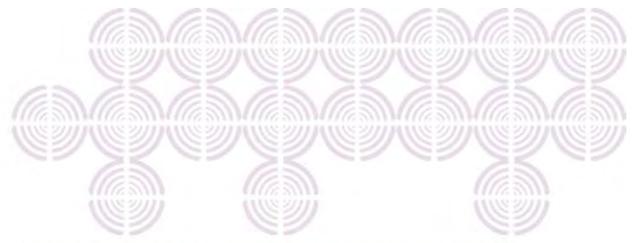
Where We Have Been and What Has Happened (70 minutes)

This time is designated to revisit and honor the group's process through JustFaith.

Distribute **Attachment B**. Encourage everyone to spend the next 30 minutes in solitude, silence and prayer, considering the questions on the sheet and jotting down responses.

After 30 minutes, reconvene in the main meeting area and. Invite participants share one or two of the most significant items from his or her reflections. (40 minutes)

Close with a word of gratitude.



Forgiveness Reflection (20 minutes)

Offer these words to frame this time:

The process and content of JustFaith has challenged us all. It has touched upon some charged and potentially controversial subjects. As our relationship to one another has developed over time, and we have trusted and held one another with care.

However, we are all human. Sometimes, we fail each other.

After this introduction, ask everyone to spend five minutes considering the question:

“Is there anything that I have said or not said, done or not done for which I need to ask forgiveness from the group or someone in the group?”

Encourage participants to write down any thoughts that arise. Allow everyone to share their responses with the rest of the group.

In closing, offer these words in prayer:

Gracious and merciful God, you call us to be your people,

To do your will, your work, your love.

But we come broken, partial, imperfect.

We come with torn edges and rough edges.

We respond as hurting and hurtful.

We are loving and unloving.

Make us whole, O Creator.

We will always be broken, but let us be

People who find and radiate grace in that brokenness.

Help us to laugh at ourselves, at our agendas,

At our insistence to be right.

Help us to be delighted by what we see and by

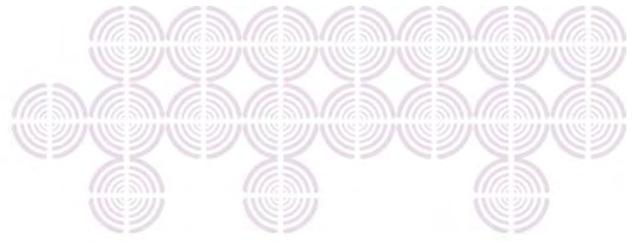
What we can't see that others can.

Give us humility.

Make us whole, O Redeemer.

Make us a community strong in love.

Make us determined to be united



Even as we are broken and fragmented.

Make us into a people who can say we are sorry even
Before it is required.

Make us a people who can extend forgiveness in
Advance of an apology.

And, now, bring us together,

Forgiving and forgiven.

Help us to celebrate the newness

That comes with being made new in grace each moment.

And direct our steps, our lives,

With the hope and gratitude

That comes with being reborn and remade

In every tiny drop of Spirit

That unites and restores.

And we pray these things

Through the Spirit of Christ

That refashions all things

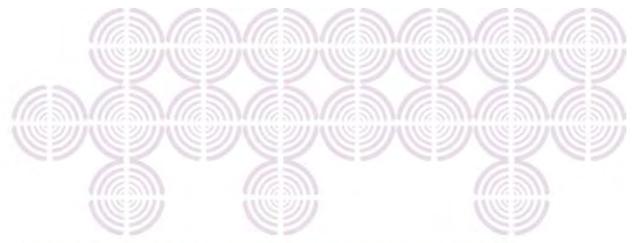
In your Name. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Ask everyone to join hands in silence for several minutes. Offer this invitation:

Whoever feels moved, share aloud a prayer of hope or blessing on the retreat.

Hold another moment of silence before closing with a sign of peace.



Saturday Morning

Morning Prayer (15 minutes)

Ask everyone to sit in the circle. Play meditative music softly in the background. Slowly and prayerfully, offer this meditation:

I ask all of you to close your eyes...to be silent...and to be aware of your breathing.

With each breath in, draw into your awareness the presence of God.

With each out breath, offer silent gratitude for the gift of this new day.

Offer two minutes of silence. Continue:

Now, call to mind a sacred word that expresses your love or desire for God.

That word might be Jesus...Spirit...Father...Mother...Creator...

whatever word captures your relationship with God.

As we share the next several minutes in silence, allow your breath to focus your attention on that one word, your mantra to presence with God.

After five minutes in silent prayer, gently offer these words in closing:

Let us slowly end our meditation, open our eyes,

and make ourselves present again to each other.

Inspiring a Compassionate Commitment (75 minutes)

Set up a television or laptop to play the three segments of the program closing DVD, “Inspiring a Compassionate Commitment.” Hand out copies of **Attachment C**.

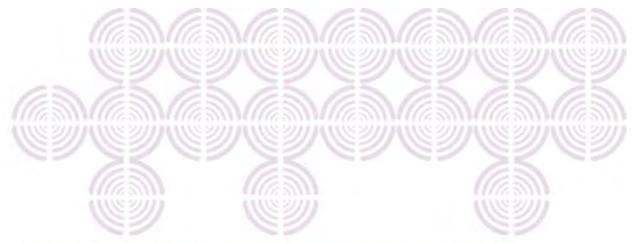
Preface this segment by sharing these words:

Close your eyes. Recall some of your treasured moments from our JustFaith journey.

(Pause)

Remember the person who invited you into JustFaith, or that moment when you realized that your answer to that invitation was, ‘Yes.’ You may have accepted the invitation boldly or you may have said, ‘Yes,’ with some reservation. Regardless, we are all here together because you chose to make the time and the commitment.

(Pause)



Open your eyes. Now, we sit in a circle of friends, fellow pilgrims who have journeyed with us. Where do we go from here? Let's listen to the testimonies of other JustFaith graduates to begin to consider what is next for each of us.

First, play the first DVD segment, "From a New Perspective." Once the segment is finished, invite participants to take 5 minutes to answer the first set of questions on Attachment C.

Offer 15 minutes of dialogue for participants to share their responses to the questions:

What gifts, challenges, and changes has this process brought you? What has surprised you? What do you hope to carry with you from this experience?

Next, play the second DVD segment, "Small Steps." Once the segment is finished, invite participants to take 5 minutes to answer the second set of questions on Attachment C.

Offer 15 minutes of dialogue for participants to share their responses to the questions:

If you could, what questions would you ask these JustFaith program graduates about their continuing journey? What would you say to them?

Finally, play the third DVD segment, "Two's and Three's." Once the segment is finished, invite participants to take 5 minutes to answer the last set of questions on Attachment C.

Offer 15 minutes of dialogue for participants to share their responses to the questions:

If you were interviewed about your JustFaith journey, how would you tell your story? What wisdom would you share with those seeking this journey? What questions do you still carry?

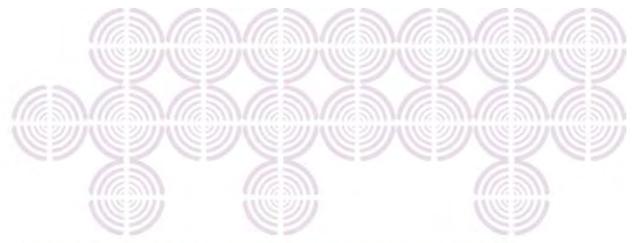
Close with a word of gratitude and this simple prayer:

God of possibility, continue to widen our perspectives. Allow us to see the path as it unfolds before us. Help us to support one another so that, as we journey forward, we may see clearly the plans you have for us. Amen.

Affirmation Experience Preparation (90 minutes)

This session is devoted to the affirmation of each member of the group.

Distribute the blank 4"x6" index cards so that each person has the same number of cards as there are participants in the group. Instruct participants to place the name of a different participant at the top of each card. Let participants know that these cards will be given to each participant after the spoken affirmations are completed.



Invite people to write part or all of their spoken affirmation on their cards for the next 90 minutes. Participants are to consider the gifts of each of the other participants. Encourage participants to write from their heart about the gifts and teachings group members have brought to the circle.

Depending on the size of your group, you may need less than 90 minutes. If so, encourage participants to go for a walk and come back in time for lunch.

Lunch Break

Saturday Afternoon

Affirmation Process (2 hours, more or less as needed)

After lunch, reconvene the group, asking participants to bring their blessing cards.

Your group should spend 10-15 minutes affirming each person. Time allotted will depend on the size of the group; large groups will need to limit time to less than a minute per sharing. Gently invite participants to keep their words brief.

Open with these words:

Many people, places, and happenings have led us to this moment at the end of our journey. Beyond the horizon, we see the glimmers of imagination that will carry us forward into mystery.

We never walk alone. God has shined forth in our fellow pilgrims here in this circle, the ones who have carried our struggles and sufferings, our joys and enlightenments. Our presence has healed one another. Together, we have become a healing presence for the world.

In gratitude, we open space to name one way our lives have blessed by the gift of each person.

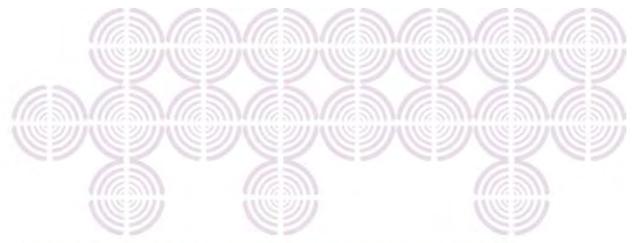
Begin the process of affirmation. For each person, begin with this prayer:

“We thank you, Loving God, for the gift of our brother/sister, (name).”

Go around the circle and allow each participant to share their words of affirmation for the person being blessed.

When everyone has had the opportunity to speak, close with an **“Amen!”**

Continue the blessing ritual until all participants and facilitators have been blessed.



When everyone has been affirmed, conclude with the following prayer:

Loving Spirit, we are grateful for the gift of life. We hold each other here as precious and dear. Thank you for this piece of life that we have been honored to share with each other. We ask that our presence in each other's life might be a blessing, a source of courage and a place of refuge for the journey ahead. We ask this, loving God, in your name. Amen.

Close with the exchange of blessing cards and a sign of peace.

Personal Goals and Call (90 minutes)

Ask participants to locate the “Ten Areas of Social Ministry” tool that they completed during Week 22 and the Discernment Exercises from Weeks 23 and 29. Hand out extra copies of **Attachment D** as needed. In addition, distribute **Attachment E**.

Ask everyone to take 15 minutes to re-consider their reflections in silence. If participants had an opportunity to complete this tool during Week 27, ask them to review it to see if anything has changed and then to complete the questions on **Attachment E**.

Reconvene the group. Invite dialogue by encouraging participants to share what stirred in their heart during the reflection. Take time to delve into the possibilities each person is beginning to explore.

Close with a word of gratitude.

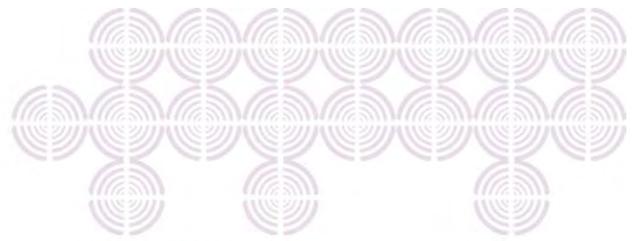
Future Group Activities Discussion (60 minutes)

Following time to discuss personal journeys, this session is a chance for participants to talk about the future of the group as a whole. This is the time to have a conversation about what the group would like to do “post-JustFaith.” Some of this discussion may have started in the weekly sessions.

Have your copy of “Engaging the World Together” handy. Invite the group to settle into a prayerful space. Follow the directions on page 5 of “Engaging the World Together” as you lead the group through the reading from the Gospel of John using *Lectio Divina*.

Depending upon the group's responses, you may wish to use **Attachment F** to help the group proceed with plans for future meetings.

Dinner Break



Saturday Evening

Closing Prayer Service (60 minutes)

Light the candle in the center of the room and the incense burning in a clay pot or bowl with sand. Have on hand pieces of paper and pens for the "releasing of burdens" part of the ritual and two small glass bowls of oil to be used for the anointing ritual. Alternate voices during the prayer.

If desired, open with a song of your choosing.

Opening Reflection

"I have called you by your name, you are mine." *(Pause)*

We have come together to renew our commitment to God's call to each of us to work for justice and peace in our world, to be bearers of the light, singers of a new song. We have been called by our loving God—in different ways, in different times, in different places—prompted by the many beautiful, faith-filled people we have met along the way and by the many events that have touched us, some earth-shattering, some as gentle as the still, small voice that Elijah heard. *(Pause)*

Micah summarizes well what is required of us—to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God—but sometimes our task is a difficult one. Dorothy Day said that we have all known the long loneliness and that we have come to know that the only solution is love—love for one another and for our world—and such a love comes only with community.

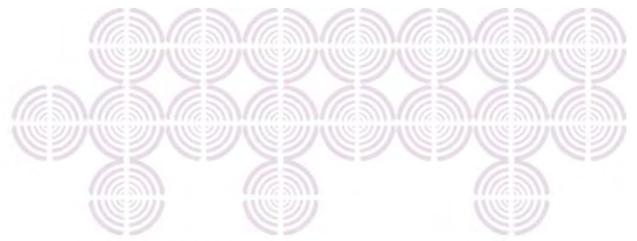
Opening Prayer

Gathered as a community, let us pray:

God of the Journey, God of Night and Light, God of Justice and Peace, God of the Struggle, we invoke your holy name. Be with us now as we reflect on the challenges we have encountered thus far on our journey, and as we consider those things that keep us from moving forward in our commitment to following you. Be with us. Bless us. Liberate us from all which holds us bound, that we might freely choose to renew our covenant with you.

Reading

"We must have no illusions. We must not be naive. If we listen to the voice of God, we make our choice, get out of ourselves and [work] for a better world. We must not expect to find it easy; we shall not walk on roses; people will not throng to hear us and applaud; and we shall not always be sure of divine protection. If we are to be pilgrims of justice and peace, we must expect the desert."
– Dom Helder Camara



Releasing of Burdens and Obstacles to Peacemaking

If desired, play instrumental background music. Open with these words:

I invite you to reflect on the desert times in your own lives, on the things that have kept you from bearing fruit in your ministry, from re-committing yourselves to the struggle for justice and peace. What do you need to let go of in order to move forward?

Pause for a few minutes of silent reflection.

Pass around the sheets of paper and pens, inviting each participant to take one. Continue:

Please write down whatever it is you need to release.

Offer several minutes of silence to allow participants to reflect and write their struggles. Continue the ritual with these words:

Let us now release these burdens to God! Come forward as you feel called to offer your prayer of surrender. As you light your prayer and drop it into the pot, let go. Welcome new life.

Allow time for participants to come forward one by one, light their paper from the center candle, and place their burning offering in the clay pot. Close with a moment of silence.

Invoking the Cloud of Witnesses

Introduce the litany with these words:

Freed from our burdens, from the things that keep us from following Jesus more closely, let us now invoke the Cloud of Witnesses to be with us, to strengthen us as we prepare to renew our covenant with God.

Together, we respond, “Pray for us.”

Reader 1: **God, creator of the universe, author of our covenant of peace...Pray for us.**

Reader 2: **God, redeemer of the world, our way of peace...Pray for us.**

Reader 1: **God, sanctifier of conscience, gift of peace...Pray for us.**

Reader 2: **Moses and Miriam, architects and singers of the covenant of justice...Pray for us.**

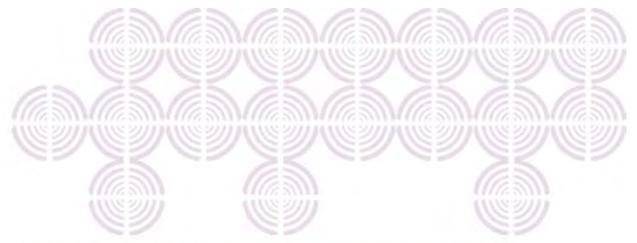
Reader 1: **Isaiah, critic of militarism, prophet of peace...Pray for us.**

Reader 2: **Esther, intercessor for the powerless, emissary of peace...Pray for us.**

Reader 1: **Amos and Micah and Hosea, voices for the oppressed...Pray for us.**

Reader 2: **Jeremiah, doomsday seer, voice of lamentation...Pray for us.**

Reader 1: **Mary, wellspring of reconciliation, mother of peacemakers...Pray for us.**



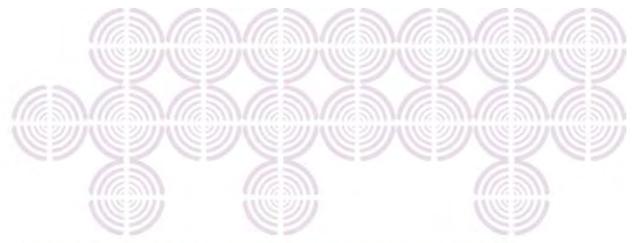
- Reader 2: **Magdalene, faithful witness of Christ's execution and resurrection...Pray for us.**
- Reader 1: **Peter and Paul, prisoners of conscience...Pray for us.**
- Reader 2: **Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, evangelists of the peaceable kin-dom...Pray for us.**
- Reader 1: **Felicity and Perpetua, midwives and mothers...Pray for us.**
- Reader 2: **Francis of Assisi, lover of creation, a rich man who chose to have nothing...Pray for us.**
- Reader 1: **Gandhi, the Mahatma, nonviolent warrior...Pray for us.**
- Reader 2: **Greg Boyle, friend of the outcast and forgotten...Pray for us.**
- Reader 1: **Martin Luther King, prophet and dreamer of the Beloved Community...Pray for us.**
- Reader 2: **Fannie Lou Hamer, unshaking voice for justice and equality...Pray for us.**
- Reader 1: **Clarence Jordan, tiller of the land and interpreter of the Good News...Pray for us.**
- Reader 2: **Myles Horton, teacher and trainer of the oppressed and prophetic...Pray for us.**
- Reader 1: **Dietrich Bonhoeffer, resistor against the powers; visionary and martyr...Pray for us.**
- Reader 2: **Thomas Merton, contemplative critic, mentor of peacemakers...Pray for us.**
- Reader 1: **Dorothy Day, witness to the radical gospel of peace...Pray for us.**
- Reader 2: **Oscar Romero, shepherd of the poor, martyr for justice...Pray for us.**
- Reader 1: **All you holy peacemakers, living and more than living...Pray for us.**
- (Pause)*
- Reader 2: **Jesus, Messiah, Prince of Peace, we pray to you.**

Call to Recommitment

Pass out copies of Attachment G. Follow the handout for this prayer and the final prayer to follow the anointing. Open with these words:

Surrounded by such a powerful, prophetic Cloud of Witnesses and enveloped by God's enduring, everlasting love for us, let us now renew our commitment to be peacemakers in our world.

- Reader 1: **The harvest is ready. Whom shall I send?**
- All: **Send me, Shaddai. I am ready to serve you, all the days of my life.**
- Reader 2: **Go into the workplace and into the streets and reveal God's saving Spirit through the quality of your lives.**
- (Pause)*
- Reader 1: **The world is waiting. Whom shall I send?**
- All: **Send me, Shaddai. I am ready to speak of you, all the days of my life.**



Reader 2: **Preach the Good News by your actions. Heal, help, teach, touch, be of good spirit in good times and bad times, and live for the glory of God.**

(Pause)

Reader 1: **The world is hungry. Whom shall I send?**

All: **Send me, Shaddai. I am ready to nourish, all the days of my life.**

Reader 2: **Feed the hungry of body and spirit, break the bread of compassion, distribute the fragments of hope, and be fed by the Word within you.**

(Pause)

Reader 1: **The vineyard is ready. Whom shall I send?**

All: **Send me, Shaddai. I am ready to work for you, all the days of my life.**

Reader 2: **Enter into and love the mission and your many ministries. Labor for justice, lobby for peace, and may you find contentment in the wages of commitment when the long hard day is done.**

Anointing for Ministry

Continue by introducing the ritual:

Before us we have oil. It was often used by the people of Israel for anointing, just as Samuel anointed Jesse's son David so that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him and empower him to be their just and righteous leader (1 Samuel 6:12-13).

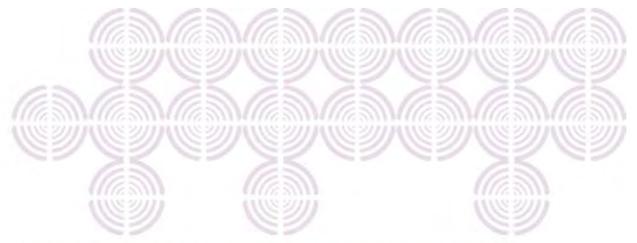
Let us now anoint one another for the journey ahead, thus sealing our commitment, our covenant with God, and our dedication to our call to be bearers of peace, justice, truth and love.

Take a bowl of oil. Go around the circle and anoint each person on the forehead (multiple facilitators can perform the ritual at the same time). As each person is anointed, speak these words of blessing:

“(Name), blessings of peace, courage and compassion as you continue your justice journey.”

Offer a minute of silence before inviting the group to close in prayer together:

All: **Somewhere out of time in the mystery of time,
Somewhere between memory and forgetfulness, dimly though,
I remember how once I stood at your mountain, trembling
Amid the fire and the thunder.
How I stood there, out of bondage in a strange land and afraid.
And you loved me and you fed me and I feasted on your word.**



And, yet, I can remember how the thunder was my heart and the fire was my soul.

Oh God, I do remember, and here I am, once more

A witness to that timeless moment, present now in the light of your word

Sending Forth

Offer this commissioning prayer:

We stand here, loving God, freed from our bondage, filled with your passion for peace and the fire of your love, a fire that burns deep in our hearts and our souls.

We stand here before you reborn, renewed in spirit and recommitted to *la lucha*, the struggle for peace and justice for those who cry out for an end to their anguish.

Send us forth as your servants, your instruments, your Presence in our world.

We ask this in the name of the One who walked this path before us.

Amen!

Close with a word of gratitude and a sign of peace.

(This prayer service excerpted and adapted from pages 221-226, Our Prayers Rise Like Incense, edited by Cindy Pile, Pax Christi, 1998. Used with permission for JustFaith use only.)

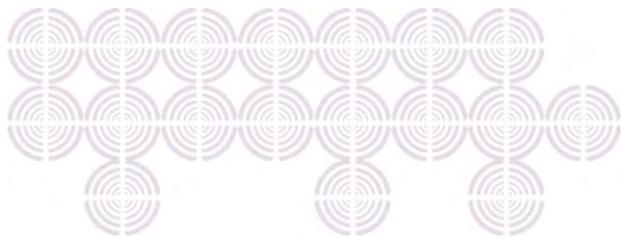
Time Together

Move to the last activity of the evening: Celebrate! Bring out the snacks and refreshments! Enjoy this time to be together in community.

Sunday Morning (Optional)

Make plans for everyone to attend the same Sunday morning worship service as the conclusion to the retreat experience.

If your group is staying at a retreat center through Sunday morning, adjust the break and meal times for Saturday to allow the last two activities—future group activities and closing prayer/ritual—to take place Sunday morning before or after attending a worship service together.



Closing Retreat Attachment A

“Lives Made One in Spirit”

Call to Prayer

Reader 1: Read **Acts 2: 1-18.**

(Pause)

Leader 1: **Loving God, in the days of old you poured out your Spirit upon your disciples gathered in fear, filling them with courage and passion to go forth and speak to people of all nations and races, that unity might be established between all who inhabit this earth. You poured out your Spirit upon all humankind, empowering those who were young and those who were old to envision a new world where justice and peace would flourish. We ask that you pour out your Spirit anew upon those of us gathered here today, that we might be healers of the wounds that divide us from one another, making us one in your Spirit, that we might be dreamers and visionaries, witnesses to your reign, a reign that we know calls us to...**

All: **Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with one another and with our God.**

Offer a prayerful pause.

Reader 2: Read **Isaiah 58: 3-11.**

Leader 1: **What does the Lord require?**

All: **God calls us to act justly.**

Offer a prayerful pause.

Reader 3: Read **Ruth 1: 8-18.**

Leader 1: **What does the Lord require?**

All: **God calls us to love tenderly.**

Offer a prayerful pause.

Reader 4: Read **John 13: 1-5, 12-15.**

Leader 1: **What does the Lord require?**

All: **God calls us to walk humbly with one another and with our God.**

Cup of Promise

Leader 2: **How do we embody the call so that it is something lived, not mere words on a page we admire, but do not allow to touch us? I invite each of us to reflect on a single promise you can make, in word and deed, to the people of God, the human community. Then, come forward, pour a small amount of wine that is before us into the pitcher and, if you so desire, articulate your promise.**



Offer silence for participants to come forward one by one, pour the wine or grape juice from one pitcher into the other, and state their promise.

Facilitators fill the chalices from the pitcher with poured wine.

Leader 2: We now share this cup to signify our willingness to share the burden of making these promises and of keeping them together.

If desired, begin to play instrumental music

Pass the cup and a cloth for wiping the cup around the circle. Each person is invited to drink.

Gathering at Table

Leader 1: Jesus was a man of deep insight. He realized that, for all of his ability to keep a crowd spell-bound by his words, he reached them most concretely in the breaking of bread, in the sharing of a cup of wine, in gathering at a table. As the teacher has done, let us do also.

(Break the bread and share it and then, if you so choose, pause from the prayer to have dinner.)

(After sharing bread and possibly a meal, proceed to the Words of Gratitude.)

Words of Gratitude

Leader 2: Having broken bread together, let us bow our heads in appreciation and offer any prayers of thanksgiving we might have.

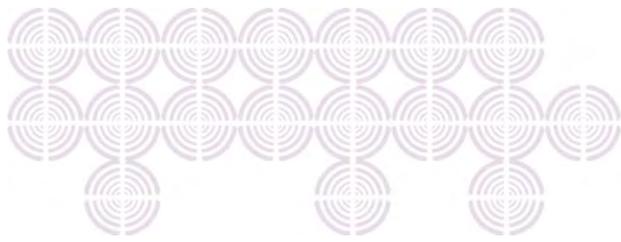
Allow time for all participants to express prayers of gratitude.

Blessing/Sending Forth

Leader 1: We have shared a cup of promise. We have broken bread. We have lifted our hearts in prayer and our voices in song.

Leader 2: So may we go forth, women and men of boldness and courage, to be faithful to the promises we have made, to live what we believe, to give what we can give. Amen, Alleluia!

(Excerpted and adapted from pages 57 & 58 of Our Prayers Rise Like Incense, Edited by Cindy Pile, Pax Christi, 1998. Used with permission for JustFaith use only.)



Closing Retreat Attachment B

What's Happened to You?

As you reflect on your JustFaith experiences throughout the year, these categories might help you to surface those experiences that were most significant for you. Focus only on the questions that interest you or prompt a strong response.

Which books, speakers, thoughts or concepts influenced your thinking in the most lasting manner?

What shifts or changes in your relationships have resulted in a different or new awareness?

How do you experience your faith differently?

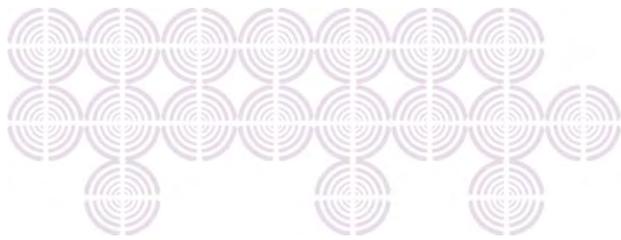
What has your experience in JustFaith “cost” you? What have you had to sacrifice in the name of responding to the invitation of God’s justice?

How are you “new”?

What were your “Aha!” experiences during the last 30 weeks?

What are the names of people in your community who live on the margins, who are poor, who are struggling to live a life of dignity? How were you affected by meeting these people?

How have the relationships in the group impacted you?



How has your understanding of love and love for your neighbor grown or changed?

How has your experience or image of God been altered?

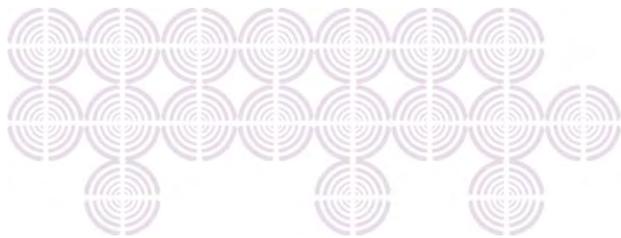
Have some relationships become easier or more difficult in the last six months?

How have your hopes and dreams changed?

How has your spending, your use of time or some other part of your lifestyle changed?

What adjectives would you use to describe yourself today that you might not have used several months ago?

Other thoughts...



Closing Retreat Attachment C

Inspiring a Compassionate Commitment

'From a New Perspective'

What gifts, challenges, and changes has this process brought you?

What has surprised you?

What do you hope to carry with you from this experience?

'Small Steps'

If you could, what questions would you ask these JustFaith program graduates about their continuing journey?

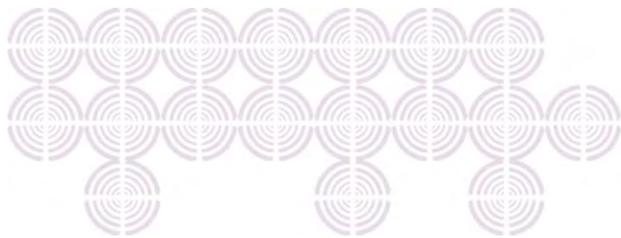
What would you say to them?

'Two's and Three's'

If you were interviewed about your JustFaith journey, how would you tell your story?

What wisdom would you share with those seeking this journey?

What questions do you still carry?



Closing Retreat Attachment D

Ten Social Ministry Options

As you reflect on your experiences in JustFaith, consider how the Holy Spirit is calling you to new or renewed commitments. A personal plan for putting faith into action might include engaging in one or more of the ten categories below.

- 1. Direct Action/Service – Working to meet immediate needs; for example, volunteering at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, emergency assistance facility, Habitat for Humanity.**

Are you tugged to work with people in need, one-on-one? In what context? What skills and gifts do you bring to this kind of ministry?

- 2. Legislative Advocacy – Endeavoring to influence city, state, or national policy by communicating with legislators and/or representatives on key issues or joining a network or group to affect change in policy**

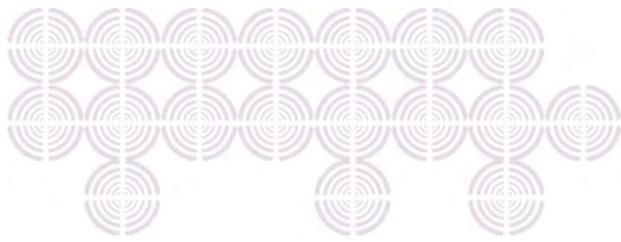
Do you feel drawn to political engagement, promoting structural change or influencing public policy? How can you imagine yourself involved? Is there an organization that appeals to you?

- 3. Justice Education – Educating others on social justice issues and opportunities for action, promoting JustFaith, leading a youth group in using the JusticeWalking program, or in starting Engaging Spirituality or JustMatters in your community**

Do you have an interest in educating others? With adults, teens or children? How can you promote justice formation at your church? How can you support the recruitment and the process for next year's JustFaith group?

- 4. Community Organizing – Joining with an empowered poor and low-income group to support their efforts, issues, and strategies to change structures and policy; for example calling government leaders to a public meeting to address toxic air quality and water pollution in low-income portions of the city**

In what ways can you get involved with promoting local structural change through a community organizing group? How can you get others from your church to accompany this group with you?



5. Leadership – Participating or taking a leadership role on justice-related committees

Are you being called to lead a group or a project or to become part of the social ministry leadership group within your church? If so, what leadership skills do you bring?

6. Simpler Living – Making lifestyle changes that reduce consumption and use of resources

What ways can you simplify your life, use fewer resources, change your buying habits, and/or change how you use your free time?

7. Financially Supporting Justice Work – Contributing monetarily to groups or organizations that do justice work on a local, national or international level

Are there projects or causes you are drawn to support?

8. Public Witness/Demonstrations – Joining others in a public demonstration in support of a justice issue such as mountaintop removal, closing the School of the Americas, or stopping nuclear proliferation

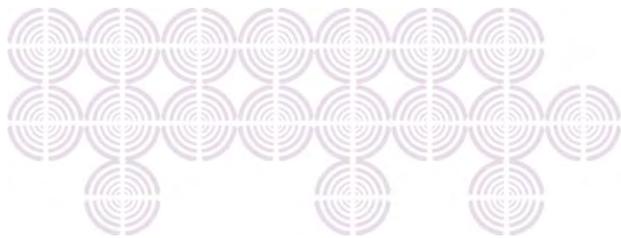
Under what circumstances would you consider joining a demonstration? What issues would compel you to do so?

9. Continued Formation – Continuing to learn about justice issues through reading, educational events or forming mission-based community; using additional JustFaith Ministries programming, i.e. JustMatters modules or Engaging Spirituality.

How can you continue your formation in social ministry and your church's social teaching?

10. Global Solidarity – Working on projects and legislation that impact people in other countries; building relationships with people in other parts of the world

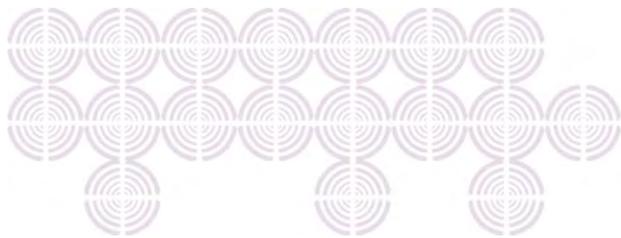
What global solidarity projects are you interested in? What projects is your church already involved in? What news stories or personal experience in another part of the world have tugged at your heart or continue to resonate with you long after the story has dropped out of the news?



Closing Retreat Attachment E

Continuing Personal Discernment on Ten Social Ministry Options

- A. Select the three or four categories from the ten social ministry options that most interest you. List them by number below. For each of these categories, identify two steps to take in order to begin moving to action.
- B. What resources do you need or what questions do you have to answer to move forward?
- C. Reflect on what, if anything, stands in the way of your taking the next step. What or who discourages you?
- D. What or who encourages you to take the next step? Who will offer you support along the way? What community will support you, encourage you, and challenge you?



Closing Retreat Attachment F (for facilitators only)

Plans for Future Group Activities

This is meant to be a tool for enhancing conversation about the possibility of your JustFaith group continuing to meet and possibly form a mission based community. Groups should not feel obligated to continue meeting, but groups have reported back to JustFaith that they do continue to meet, and they are looking for ideas about how to sustain their ongoing efforts. The following questions and topics of conversation are selected to encourage your group to seriously consider continuing to meet as a mission based community.

Before using the materials below, it is essential that the group has completed the group discernment from the “Engaging the World Together” document. If the group seems to have a consensus for continuing to meet as a small faith community in mission to the world, then the following ideas and questions may be helpful to lay the groundwork.

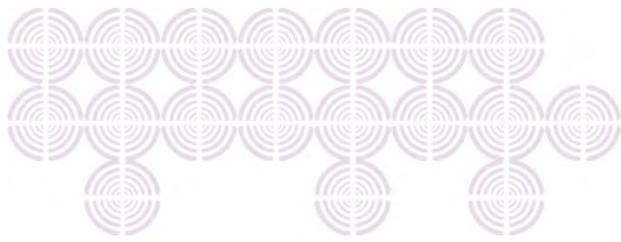
Start this discussion with a short introduction. Select from some of the following paragraphs, but use your own words to present these ideas.

Throughout his life, Jesus brought people together to learn, to pray, to care for each other and to care for the poor. Jesus knew that for God’s work to be done, people had to be in community. God has also planted in each of us a yearning to be in community. It is in community that we continue to learn to love and care for each other and the world. This is still the best way for Christians to work together to bring about the reign of God. God’s plan is that we live our faith together.

In concert with this early Christian community tradition, consider transforming your JustFaith community into a mission based community. These communities are made up of individuals who intentionally commit to one another, have a mission that is centered on the poor and vulnerable, pray frequently for the needs of the world and for each other, and are committed to ongoing formation and spiritual development.

Forming a mission based community with your JustFaith group is an excellent way to continue participating in community because caring and trusting relationships have probably already been established. In addition, the members of your JustFaith group have much in common as you formed relationships around the Gospel call to meet the needs of the poor. This community of support will flourish if there are regular opportunities to pray together; to share the experiences, frustrations and joys of doing social ministry work; to trade insights; and to continue to celebrate relationships within the group.

Working to change systems that keep people impoverished and marginalized can be very rewarding. It can also be frustrating because the efforts involved sometimes yield only limited successes. Changing political and economic systems to make them more just takes significant time and energy; and, results can be painfully slow in coming. Such difficult work cannot be done alone. Participation in a mission based community and working with people who are supportive, understanding and committed will keep passion and hope burning in your hearts.



The following questions can be useful prompts to help you and your group begin making some decisions about continuing to meet as a mission based community. However, if some participants are not ready to make this commitment, then you may need to plan a post-retreat meeting to fully consider these questions.

1. What is your response to the idea of forming a mission based community as presented in the “Engaging the World Together” document?
2. In what ways are you drawn to this idea? In what ways do you see this type of community supporting you and your work in the area of social ministry?
3. Who would be interested in further exploring this as an option for our group? (If some people are not yet ready to express this commitment but are interested in further discernment, allow for the possibility of inviting them to a future gathering.)
4. What would be the best method of communication about group meetings?
5. If most of the participants are not interested in the idea of moving towards a mission based community but do want to continue meeting, discuss what the next steps should be. When should the group meet again? What will this meeting look like? Who will be responsible for facilitating and coordinating this meeting?
6. How can this group support the recruitment process for JustFaith groups next year?
7. How can this group serve the church, the surrounding community, a neighborhood in a less affluent part of the city, or an impoverished community in another country?
8. Does this group want to start a social ministry committee or focus on a specific project?



Closing Retreat Attachment G

Call to Recommitment

- Reader 1: **The harvest is ready. Whom shall I send?**
All: **Send me, Shaddai. I am ready to serve you, all the days of my life.**
- Reader 2: **Go into the workplace and into the streets and reveal God's saving Spirit through the quality of your lives. *(Pause)***
- Reader 1: **The world is waiting. Whom shall I send?**
All: **Send me, Shaddai. I am ready to speak of you, all the days of my life.**
- Reader 2: **Preach the Good News by your actions. Heal, help, teach, touch, be of good spirit in good times and bad times, and live for the glory of God. *(Pause)***
- Reader 1: **The world is hungry. Whom shall I send?**
All: **Send me, Shaddai. I am ready to nourish, all the days of my life.**
- Reader 2: **Feed the hungry of body and spirit, break the bread of compassion, distribute the fragments of hope, and be fed by the Word within you. *(Pause)***
- Reader 1: **The vineyard is ready. Whom shall I send?**
All: **Send me, Shaddai. I am ready to work for you, all the days of my life.**
- Reader 2: **Enter into and love the mission and your many ministries. Labor for justice, lobby for peace, and may you find contentment in the wages of commitment when the long hard day is done.**

Anointing for Ministry: Closing Prayer

- All: **Somewhere out of time in the mystery of time,
Somewhere between memory and forgetfulness, dimly though,
I remember how once I stood at your mountain, trembling
Amid the fire and the thunder.
How I stood there, out of bondage in a strange land and afraid.
And you loved me and you fed me and I feasted on your word.
And, yet, I can remember how the thunder was my heart and the fire was my soul.
Oh God, I do remember, and here I am, once more
A witness to that timeless moment, present now in the light of your word
And in those gathered here in your presence, I am reborn.**